

Court language interpreter seminar set for Jan. 20-21 in Jackson

December 16, 2015

The Mississippi Administrative Office of Courts will conduct a seminar to introduce bilingual speakers to the requirements for court interpreting on Jan. 20 and 21, 2016, in Jackson.

The Ethics and Skill Building Seminar will be held at the Mississippi Supreme Court training room in the Gartin Justice Building, 450 High Street in Jackson.

The registration deadline is Jan. 8, 2016. A registration fee of \$100 includes the seminar and lunch for both days. The registration form is at this link: <http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/forms/REGISTRATION%20FORM%20January%202016.pdf>. The seminar agenda is at this link: <http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/forms/AGENDA-JAN2016%20.pdf>.

Court language interpreters must be fluent in English and a second language, and must understand court proceedings. The seminar will provide an introduction to court proceedings.

Participants should arrive by 8 a.m. Jan. 20 to sign in. Presentations are scheduled 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Jan. 20 and 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Jan. 21. The first day's program will introduce participants to the role of the court language interpreter, modes of interpretation and credentialing requirements. The morning session of the second day will cover how cases move through the court system as well as ethics, rules and standards for court language interpreters.

The Jan. 21 afternoon session will be held at the Hinds County Chancery Courthouse. Senior Hinds County Chancery Judge Denise Owens will talk to participants at 1:30 p.m. A mock trial presentation will begin at 2 p.m.

A written examination will be given Jan. 22, 2016, for participants who wish to pursue certification and be able to work in Mississippi court proceedings. The written exam will be given at the Gartin Justice Building from 9 a.m. to 11:15 a.m., with check-in beginning at 8:30 a.m. The deadline to register for the written exam is Jan. 8.

Three court language interpreter seminars are conducted each year in the northern, central and southern regions of the state. Participation in a seminar is the first step in the program which will train, certify, and test individuals who wish to serve as interpreters in Mississippi courtrooms.

The AOC developed the Mississippi Court Interpreter Credentialing Program to assist state courts in their endeavors to provide equal access to justice for limited English proficiency individuals. The AOC program provides all state courts with a list of language interpreters who have demonstrated proficiency in oral and written interpretation of court proceedings. The credentialing program provides two levels of proficiency: registered and certified. Certified is the more advanced level. The registry is at this link: <http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/registry.html>.

Administrative Office of Courts Deputy Director Ta'Shia Gordon said, "Language access in the courts is vital to preserving the integrity of our legal system. Individuals with limited English proficiency must have access to an interpreter to understand court

proceedings and their legal rights.”

Sixteen interpreters currently are credentialed by AOC. Languages include Spanish, Mandarin Chinese and Russian. There is also a great need for Vietnamese speakers, but none have been credentialed yet.

Credentialed interpreters include fourteen Spanish speakers, one Russian speaker, and one who speaks Mandarin Chinese. Eight interpreters are certified, and eight are registered. Interpreters live in Brandon, Clinton, French Camp, Gulfport, Hazlehurst, Jackson, Newton and Ocean Springs as well as Cordova, Goodlettsville, Memphis and Nashville, Tenn., and North Augusta, S.C.

AOC adopted Standards for Court Interpreters and a Code of Ethics for Court Interpreters on Oct. 17, 2011. The rules for court interpreters apply to municipal court, justice court, youth court, county court, circuit court, chancery court and grand jury proceedings. Rules regarding certification are at this link: http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/rules_on_standards.pdf. Other information about the interpreter program may be found here: <http://courts.ms.gov/aoc/courtinterpreter/resources.html>.

The AOC standards and code of ethics are modeled on standards for language interpretation adopted by the National Center for State Courts’ Consortium for Language Access in the Courts. The Mississippi AOC is a member of the Consortium.

For additional information, contact Ta’Shia Gordon at 601-576-4632.

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